Lynn Arnold to lead prayers at former premier John Bannon's state funeral

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Penny Debelle Sunday Mail (SA)

Former SA premier Bannon to be farewelled

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THE Labor MP who took over when former Premier John Bannon resigned over the State Bank disaster will lead a prayer for his former colleague at today's state funeral.

Dr Lynn Arnold, a former Quaker and academic who retrained as an Anglican priest and is assistant priest at St Peter's Cathedral, said he was very pleased to have been included in the service, to be held at the cathedral from 1pm.

"Angela (Bannon) has asked that I do that and I appreciate that," he said.

The order of service will not be released until just before the funeral but is likely to

include short eulogies from close family and friends for Mr Bannon — SA's 39th Premier and its longest-serving Labor Premier.

Dr Arnold said he was pleased to be part of a contingent of former Premiers who will pay their respects.

"It will be quite something at the wake afterwards too," he said.

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John Bannon's successor Dr Lynn Arnold

Former Labor premier, the late John Bannon.

Mr Bannon, who was born in Bendigo Victoria, died in Adelaide on December 13 after a long battle with cancer. He was 72.

At least one former Prime Minister, Labor's Julia Gillard, will attend his funeral and it is understood that Bob Hawke hopes to come.

Federal Labor will be represented by Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and former MPs including Nick Bolkus, now a lobbyist, and Gareth Evans are likely to attend.

All surviving former state premiers are expected, among them Mike Rann who for a time was Mr Bannon's press secretary, Labor's Rob Kerin, Liberal premiers John Olsen and Dean Brown and a former Liberal Country League Premier Steele Hall, who is 87.

Dr Arnold said he would return from a family holiday in Victoria on Sunday in readiness for Mr Bannon's funeral and to participate in the St Peter's Cathedral Christmas services.

Bannon ministry after being sworn in at Government House in 1989. From left: Terry Hemmings, Bob Gregory, Kym Mayes, Barbara Wiese, Lynn Arnold, Chris Sumner, the Premier, the Governor, Don Hopgood, John Klunder, Susan Lenehan, Frank Blevins, Greg Crafter and Anne Levy.

Mr Bannon's family has requested privacy since his death last Sunday but there will be a small media presence at the state funeral. The cathedral holds 650 people and any overflow will be seated outside where the service will be broadcast on small screens.

The funeral is open to the public and commences at 1pm.

Aside from his political endeavours Mr Bannon was an accomplished runner.

The life member of the South Australian Road Runners Club completed 28 Adelaide marathons, his last being in 2006.

His best time was two hours and 44 minutes in 1983 which would have put him among some of the world's elite runners.

He holds the equal best average running time over 25 Adelaide marathons of three hours and seven minutes.